

REMARKS

I. Summary

Claims 1, 3-6, 13-14, and 17-21 are pending. No amendments were made. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration in view of the following remarks.

II. Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

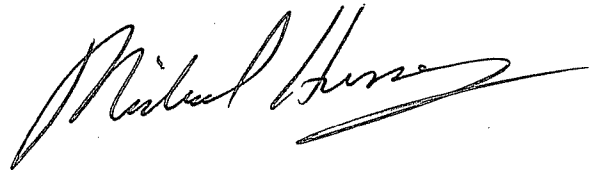
Claims 1, 3-6, 13-14, 17, and 19-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,995,965 to Experton ("Experton") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,374,253 to Weider et al. ("Weider") and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,724,575 to Hoover et al. ("Hoover"). Claim 18 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Experton in view of Weider, and further in view of Hoover and U.S. Patent No. 5,345,586 to Hamala et al. ("Hamala").

However, Weider is not prior art. Weider was filed at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on December 30, 1998. Weider does not claim priority to another application. The present application was filed on August 22, 2003 as a continuation of U.S. Patent Application Number 09/111,896, which was filed July 8, 1998. Therefore, Weider does not qualify as prior art to the present application. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejections of claims 1, 3-6, 13-14, and 17-21.

III. Conclusion

The present pending claims of this application are allowable and Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to issue a Notice of Allowance for this application. Should the Examiner deem a telephone conference to be beneficial in expediting allowance/examination of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael E. Hussey", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

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